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Another Reprise On 'Liberty Amendment'

While the war in Vietnam was "escalating" apace on Wednesday, one group of patriots—locally represented in this instance by state Senator Dan T. Sprick of Little Rock—was as busy as ever trying to deny the federal government the revenue sources required to support this or any other kind of war—hot, cold or medium.

Of all the examples of the aberrations that the flesh of the body politic has been made heir to in recent years, the "Liberty Amendment", so-called, may be the most rarefied of all. The proposal—which, in its simplest terms, would repeal the 16th (Income Tax) Amendment—has been beaten twice running in Arkansas, in 1961 and again in 1963, but there is no real reason to hope that it will ever lack for a sponsor if it should be re-introduced every odd year from now until Armageddon. In any event, the chosen front man this time is the estimable Senator Sprick, a winner by any test.

We do not know what Senator Sprick would use to equip and pay off our fighting men. Green stamps, perhaps? We do know that it does not take an Erasmus or an IBM machine to figure out that the United States government could not realistically expect to meet any considerable part even of its absolutely *unavoidable* obligations in the absence of the basic revenue source that is the federal income tax.

As noted, the "Liberty Amendment" has been kicking around for some years now, and a study of its purposes made by the Congressional Joint Economic Committee as early as 1961 esti-

imated the total revenue loss involved as \$65 billion. In its absence, other revenue sources would permit the government to meet the interest on the national debt, but would not allow it to meet more than a fraction of other fixed obligations. Adoption of the proposed amendment would abolish (to start with) the Social Security Administration and the Veterans Administration. One random sampling of other foreclosed agencies includes: The Bureau of Public Roads, AEC, CIA, SCS, National Park Service, NLRB, the Patent Office, the CAA, the Civil Defense Administration, the FHA, the Federal Reserve system, etc., etc.

Seven states have approved the amendment in all the 15 years that the proposal has been regularly offered to all comers: Wyoming, Texas, Nevada, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina. If we were the director of the Budget, we should be tempted to let the lot of them shove out to sea on their own, if the Treasury could but be spared the net drain represented by their insistent demands on the worn old federal brood sow.

The "Liberty Amendment" is a Southern California creation—as nobody, surely, will be surprised to learn—and its principal congressional sponsor is Representative James B. Utt of California, one of the few Birch-liners to survive the November 3 gully washer. Congressman Utt's demesne is Orange County, where the Minutemen already are in the brush, waiting to swoop in and de-fluoridate a local water system whenever the chance presents itself.

We see no reason why Arkansas should do any part of Mr. Utt's work for him.

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